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Organizational matters

Report of the second regular session of 2011, 5 to 7 December 2011

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I. Organizational matters

1. The second regular session of 2011 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held in New York from 5 to 7 December 2011.

2. The President of the Executive Board of UN-Women, U. Joy Ogwu (Nigeria), opened the session. The Secretary of the Board reviewed the workplan for the session.

3. The Executive Board approved the agenda for its second regular session (UNW/2011/L.3) and its workplan, as revised.

4. The Executive Board adopted the report on the annual session (27 to 30 June 2011) as contained in UNW/2011/10.

5. The Executive Board adopted the tentative workplan for the first regular session 2012 (24 and 25 January 2012) (UNW/2012/L.1). The Secretary, in response to a query, noted that the dates had changed from the dates originally scheduled: 26 and 27 January 2012.

6. The Executive Board adopted the proposed annual workplan of the Executive Board for 2012, as contained in UNW/2012/CRP.1, as orally amended. The Secretary of the Board noted that proposals for the principles, the criteria and the procedures to guide the use of cost-recovery income would be added to the agenda of the second regular session of 2012, in accordance with paragraph 12 of decision 2011/5. In addition, an update on the progress in the analysis to specify which activities are to be considered as normative, operational or a combination of the two, in accordance with paragraph 75 of General Assembly resolution 64/289, as requested in paragraph 16 of decision 2011/5, would be provided in 2012.

II. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Statement by Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director

7. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director introduced the institutional budget estimates for UN-Women for the biennium 2012-2013 (UNW/2011/11), the report of the Advisory Committee on Administration and Budgetary Questions (UNW/2011/12) and the UN-Women management response to the report of the Advisory Committee (UNW/2011/12/Add.1). As the organization's first institutional budget, it was the "genuine founding budget" of UN-Women, a strategic tool that reflected the strategic intent of the mandate of UN-Women, as laid out in the founding resolution and the strategic plan 2011-2013.

8. While a new organization, UN-Women was already demonstrating results, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director noted, especially in the Arab region, where it had provided access to good practices in Egypt and Tunisia in promoting gender equality in institution-building, including electoral reform and constitution formulation. Other accomplishments during the year included the public and media attention garnered by the report *Progress of the World's Women*, which focused on access to justice. The normative role of UN-Women remained strong and the organization was working to combine the normative function with operational and policy work to produce impact. An example of this was the work of UN-Women

with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and some Member States in organizing a high-level side event on women's political participation during the General Assembly, bringing together women Heads of State and Government and women ministers from all regions of the world. The Joint Statement of that event, signed also by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director, inspired a new resolution calling for stronger action on women's political participation, adopted by the Third Committee of the General Assembly. UN-Women had also taken steps to position gender equality and women's empowerment at the centre of inter-agency work in the area of food security, especially with linkage to the economic empowerment of rural women.

9. With regard to coordination, a system-wide action plan would be presented to the Chief Executives Board in April 2012, providing a stronger foundation for promoting gender mainstreaming and accountability in the United Nations system. A strong case had been made for the promotion of "Delivering as One for Women" at a meeting held in Montevideo, in November 2011, through prioritizing women's empowerment and gender equality in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks by United Nations country teams. Gender equality and women's empowerment were highlighted in the agreement reached at the fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan, Republic of Korea, 29 November-1 December 2011).

10. The budget responded to the vision of UN-Women as a dynamic and effective organization. Based on the assessment of the resources necessary to achieve the results laid out in the strategic plan 2011-2013, UN-Women was proposing an institutional budget for 2012-2013 of $140.8 million. The budget proposed to devote 86.3 per cent of total resources to development activities. The budget showed an increase compared with the support budget for 2011, approved by the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2011.

11. The increase arose primarily from the funding of 139 additional posts. About one third of the posts reflected functions that were already being carried out, either through positions covered under the programme budget, or covered by special service agreements. Three quarters of the new positions were in the field, in line with the stated priority of the strategic plan. Those positions would bring the number of UN-Women country presences with minimum institutional budget-funded capacity to 55 by the end of 2013. The concept of minimum capacity was informed by the field capacity assessment, which had concluded that, in order for UN-Women to deliver on its mandate in any country, a minimum capacity of three professional staff would be required, including one who could act as a representative at a level comparable to the membership of the United Nations country team. The remaining one quarter of the new positions were at UN-Women headquarters, including in the areas of resource mobilization, finance and budget, human resources and policy.

12. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director noted that the organization had revised downward its own income estimates for the biennium 2012-2013, from $900 million to $700 million, taking into consideration the effect of the current economic climate on UN-Women. Nevertheless, there were grounds for optimism on resource mobilization: the financial resources of UN-Women were currently greater than the four predecessor entities' combined budgets. The donor base was being broadened, with numerous donors providing a major proportion of the funding of UN-Women, rather than just a few. Five countries had provided contributions above

$10 million and several more were close to reaching that mark. New donors were emerging, including the Republic of Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Nigeria, Indonesia, Gabon and India. Member States were strongly encouraged to translate their commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment into an increased contribution for UN-Women for 2012 and beyond.

13. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director cited the two major corporate initiatives designed to improve business methods at UN-Women: the field capacity assessment and the ongoing regional architecture review. A third initiative would be the organizational effectiveness and efficiency initiative, a priority effort to simplify, harmonize and strengthen systems, policies and procedures. That initiative would examine finance and budget processes, explore ways to reduce administrative burdens, particularly in the field, and pool capacity, where possible. It would also review human resources processes and propose ways in which UN-Women could better invest in its staff to develop the capacities necessary to deliver the results of the strategic plan.

14. The regional architecture review would be integrated with the organizational effectiveness and efficiency initiative to identify how functions that were currently spread between headquarters, regional and country levels could be either streamlined or consolidated. The results would be reported to the Executive Board at the annual session 2012. One immediate step in moving regional capacity closer to the field was the shifting of regional functions for the Arab States to Egypt.

15. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked the President, other Bureau members and the members of the Executive Board for their role in supporting UN-Women.

Discussion

16. Twenty-four delegations responded to the statement of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director. Among the speakers were the Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development of Nigeria, the Ambassador-at-Large for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, eight Permanent Representatives of Member States and a representative of the Gender Equality Architecture Review Campaign.

17. The Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development of Nigeria stated that the creation of UN-Women could not have come at a better time. It was commendable that UN-Women was taking advantage of the expertise, knowledge, partnership and experience of other United Nations agencies, thereby advancing the goal of coordination and coherence of the United Nations in delivering on its mandate. The focus areas of UN-Women coincided with Nigeria's priority areas as contained in the national gender policy. The Minister underlined the advances in women's increased political participation in Nigeria, including the current composition of 33 per cent of women as cabinet ministers, up from 11 per cent in 2010. Nigeria's voluntary contribution of $500,000 to UN-Women was a demonstration of a genuine commitment to women's equality and empowerment, nationally and globally. The Minister paid tribute to the President for the able manner in which she had conducted affairs of the Board over the past year.

18. Delegations congratulated the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director for her strong leadership and UN-Women for its progress during its first year of operations and expressed their support for the organization and its first institutional

budget. Women and girls must be at the centre of development efforts, speakers emphasized, as the benefits could transform their own lives as well as those of their families, communities, societies and economies. There was a multiplier effect in empowering women and girls that could enable growth and achievement of all Millennium Development Goals. The role of UN-Women in global advocacy for gender equality was cited, especially at the fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. A similar role was anticipated at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. One speaker urged cooperation between the Executive Board and the Commission on the Status of Women.

19. Speakers cited achievements with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women in their own countries, including in the areas of political empowerment, socio-economic advancement and the creation of laws on violence against women and other gender-specific crimes. Progress in health, education and maternal mortality was also cited.

20. Underlining the importance of delivery of high-quality programmes with measurable development results at the country level, speakers also cited the leadership role of UN-Women in creating enhanced United Nations country team work for women and girls and avoiding duplication at the field level. The transition from a highly centralized organization to a field-focused organization and the scaling-up of activities through larger and fewer programmes was welcomed. It was encouraging that of the new posts, 25 per cent represented a change of funding source from programme resources to the institutional budget. Several delegations underlined the need to respect national ownership and country-driven priorities, with programmes and projects based on the requests of Governments. One delegation requested that UN-Women use local staff and national procurement when possible.

21. The level of development in a particular country must be considered, speakers noted, emphasizing that UN-Women should be where the need was greatest, including in fragile States and those in transition. UN-Women was urged to maintain its presence in middle-income countries, such as those in Latin America, where it supported efforts to combat social exclusion and institute gender-responsive budgeting. UN-Women was encouraged to become a catalyst for South-South cooperation. Delegations also cited the importance of working within the "Delivering as One" initiative and collaboration with civil society.

22. One delegation cited the results of its multilateral aid review that had identified organizations with a good track record on delivery, results and impact. In that regard, the UN-Women strategic plan 2011-2013 had provided a strong results framework. It was necessary, however, to see further progress to ensure that all baseline and milestone information would be included in the revised results framework in 2013.

23. Speakers welcomed the continued work of UN-Women to prioritize increased capacity in the field, especially through strengthening existing country presence and the development of new country offices. One speaker underlined that the principle of national ownership also applied to the establishment of offices. Speakers looked forward to the outcome of the regional architecture review, to be presented at the annual session 2012.

24. Several delegations requested more detailed information on the nature of the posts to be created under the proposed budget and cited the need for the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on this issue to be taken into account. Speakers underlined the need for UN-Women to adhere to the highest standards of transparency, including by implementing the principles of the International Aid Transparency Initiative. A clear disclosure policy on all aspects of its work was needed. The adoption by UN-Women of the International Public Accounting Standards was welcomed.

25. Speakers noted the revision downward of the resource mobilization target for 2012-2013 given the global economic situation. Several delegations commended UN-Women for its commitment to cost-efficiency through the organizational efficiency initiative and cost reduction, efforts that they hoped would be continued. Others underlined the need not to let contributions diminish, particularly as women could be impacted more than otherwise in the difficult economic environment. Speakers encouraged UN-Women to expand its partnerships with the private sector and foundations in resource mobilization.

26. Some speakers cited the importance of taking concrete measures to ensure that core resources did not subsidize activities funded by earmarked contributions. One speaker urged that the consideration of the apportionment of funding from the regular budget and voluntary contributions, as determined in paragraph 75 of General Assembly resolution 64/289, be undertaken to ensure that voluntary contributions are allocated exclusively to functions related to operational activities.

27. Many delegations cited their pledged and/or actual contributions to UN-Women. The Government of the Netherlands announced an increase of €2 million in a core contribution to UN-Women, a tripling over the level of 2010, support to the Gender Equality Fund activities in the Middle East and North Africa and financing of UN-Women activities in women's leadership and political participation in Egypt and Morocco. The Government of the United Kingdom cited its contribution of £10 million in core funding for 2011 and 2012. The Government of India had pledged $5 million to core resources, with $1 million contributed in April 2011 and another $1 million to be contributed in December 2011. The Government of Kazakhstan announced the doubling of its contribution to $100,000 in 2011. The Government of Malaysia reaffirmed its pledge to increase its contribution from $10,000 to $50,000. The Government of Mexico cited its contribution of $150,000 and $800,000 to the Gender Equality Fund. The Government of Bangladesh pledged $10,500 for 2011.

28. The representative of the Gender Equality Architecture Review Campaign pledged continued support to UN-Women and advocated for the meaningful participation of civil society in the work of UN-Women and for robust funding to the new entity. While the campaign supported the budget, it was deeply concerned that UN-Women would not have equal footing with other United Nations agencies unless the budget increased rapidly. All donors were urged to scale up their contributions, as the substantial increase in financial support was vital to ensuring that UN-Women would be successful in building a solid foundation and making a difference in the lives of millions of girls and women, their families and communities around the world. The campaign representative emphasized that UN-Women must go beyond the sum of its parts to achieve its mandate by scaling up its country presence, strengthening system-wide coherence and leading efforts to

mainstream gender. The campaign welcomed the formalized engagement with civil society advisory groups at the global, regional and country levels as critical for UN-Women to fulfil its mandate and be accountable to the people it served. The intention to create a non-governmental organization advisory group was welcomed, and UN-Women was urged to devise both formal and informal methods of engagement with civil society in all areas of thematic and country-level work.

29. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked the speakers for their interventions. She noted that the organization was using the field capacity assessment as a tool and that the outcomes of the regional architecture review and the operational efficiency and effectiveness review and related recommendations would be shared with the Board. UN-Women recognized the importance of national ownership, demand-driven activities and sustainability, as stated in the principles of the strategic plan 2011-2013.

30. In responding to delegations that had asked for more details on the posts included in the budget proposal, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director noted that posts were proposed for challenging or understaffed areas such as resource mobilization, budget and human resources, as well as policy areas dealing with data/research and political participation. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the comments of the Board with regard to providing more information on posts were welcomed and would be addressed.

31. With regard to countries in transition, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director underlined the capacity support provided by UN-Women in cooperation with United Nations partners at a time when women were advancing in political strength, for example, in Egypt, with the establishment of the first Egyptian Women's Association and the issuance of national identification cards to enable 60,000 women to vote.

32. In responding to other comments, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director affirmed that UN-Women would adhere to the highest standards of transparency, which was an essential part of organizational effectiveness. She noted that cost savings had been realized through office consolidation and a full report would be provided to the Board during 2012. UN-Women would enhance its work with civil society through the advisory committee and continued work at the country level.

33. The Executive Board, following informal consultations, approved the following decision.

2011/5 UN-Women biennial institutional budget 2012-2013

The Executive Board,

1. *Stresses* the importance of enabling UN-Women to enhance its support to countries in their support of gender equality and the empowerment of women, which will be carried out in accordance with the strategic plan and its annexes, as approved in its decision 2011/3, and affirms its intention to support the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director in the mobilization of voluntary resources;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the use of voluntary resources for the institutional budget for the biennium 2012-2013 (UNW/2011/11) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (UNW/2011/12) on the proposed UN-Women institutional budget estimates for the biennium 2012-2013;

3. *Notes* the management response to the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (UNW/2011/12/Add.1), and requests the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to take fully into account the observations and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in the preparation of future institutional budgetary proposals;

4. *Welcomes* the ongoing effort to strengthen the presence of UN-Women at the field level, in accordance with the principles laid out in its decision 2011/3, inter alia, paragraph 3, and in annex IV of the strategic plan for 2011-2013, and looks forward to receiving information periodically from the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director in this regard, including on the staffing and posts functions in field offices;

5. *Welcomes* the intention of UN-Women to keep the management and administration component of the institutional budget to the minimum necessary so that the pace of growth in support activities does not exceed the rate of programmes development activities;

6. *Welcomes* the results-based budgeting approach used for the UN-Women institutional budget estimates for 2012-2013, including the application of harmonized cost classifications, in accordance with paragraph 12 of Executive Board decision 2011/1;

7. *Welcomes* the organizational efficiency and effectiveness initiative, and encourages the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to continue to seek efficiencies to ensure the maximum possible funds available for development programmes, and invites the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to inform the Executive Board on the results of measures to improve business processes and enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness at its annual session 2012;

8. *Looks forward* to considering at its annual session 2012 a report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to the Executive Board on the conclusions of the regional architecture review, including potential reconfiguration of regional, subregional and country presence and the budgetary implications of the report;

9. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to ensure that all sources of funding bear their fair share of management costs and to avoid the subsidization of non-core voluntary resources by core voluntary resources;

10. *Approves* a gross appropriation of $140.8 million for the institutional budget for 2012-2013;

11. *Notes* that funding from core voluntary resources is estimated at $132.3 million and from other resources and trust funds at $8.5 million, and

recognizes that additional extrabudgetary income earned shall be used for the institutional budget;

12. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to submit for the consideration of the Executive Board at its second regular session 2012 proposals for the principles, criteria and procedures that should guide the use of cost-recovery income, taking into account the harmonized cost-recovery policies and methodologies used by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA);

13. *Authorizes* UN-Women to carry forward to 2012-2013 $2 million of the unutilized balance of resources approved by the Executive Board for change management in paragraph 9 of its decision 2011/1, in further support of the change management process, including the regional architecture review and organizational efficiency and effectiveness initiative, and requests the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on the use of these resources at the second regular session 2012;

14. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to make further efforts to strengthen linkages between results, as outlined in the UN-Women strategic plan, and resources utilized, in the context of the submission of an integrated budget for programme and institutional support for the biennium 2014-2015;

15. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to continue to enhance the clarity and the transparency of future institutional budgets;

16. *Recalls* General Assembly resolution 65/259 and paragraph 13 of its decision 2011/1, looks forward to considering, in the context of the proposed institutional budget for the biennium 2014-2015, the outcome of the analysis to specify which activities are to be considered as normative, operational or a combination of the two, in accordance with paragraph 75 of General Assembly resolution 64/289, and invites the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to keep the Executive Board updated on progress in this regard.

34. Following the approval of decision 2011/5, the President thanked Vice-President Magnus Lennartsson (Sweden), for serving as facilitator, a role in which he had demonstrated leadership, patience and guidance in his efforts on behalf of the Bureau, the Board and the secretariat. The President thanked all members and observers for their commitment, willingness to work together and spirit of compromise.

III. Other matters

Closing remarks

35. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director stated that the Board had provided UN-Women with vital support with the approval of the organization's first institutional budget. The positive comments and suggestions for future improvements were welcomed. She recognized the President, Ambassador Ogwu, as one of the closest friends of UN-Women throughout the year. She also thanked

Vice-President Lennartsson (Sweden) for his hard work as facilitator for three decisions of the Board during 2012. She thanked the Board for approving the decision on the institutional budget and recognized those Member States that had made pledges to UN-Women. The organization would continue to strengthen its processes and was justifiably proud of what it had achieved during 2011. UN-Women would, however, continue to take steps to increase transparency and harmonize procedures in its work to deliver results for women and girls around the world. In doing so, there would be an open relationship with the Board as it provided strategic inputs to UN-Women's work to empower women and girls.

36. One representative took the floor to congratulate the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director and her team for the remarkable work undertaken for gender equality and the empowerment of women and the adoption of the first institutional budget. The role of UN-Women in countries in transition was of particular importance, especially in the Arab States and in West Africa. As indicated in the budget, it was important that the development of regional and country offices remain tailored to country needs. A special effort was required in French-speaking countries. The speaker noted the contributions of France to UN-Women: €5 million (2011-2015) for the combat of maternal mortality, an inter-agency effort in which UN-Women was working with UNFPA, the World Health Organization and UNICEF; €1.2 million for a three-year (2011-2013) programme to combat violence against women in sub-Saharan Africa and in Arab States; €500,000 for two years, to promote access to justice for Afghan women; and €200,000 for the UN-Women administrative budget for 2011.

37. Another speaker looked forward to the expansion of UN-Women country offices, an effort that should give priority to developing countries. Equitable geographic representation among UN-Women staff was a key factor. The speaker noted that his country, Lesotho, had made significant strides in working to end violence against women.

38. In marking the end of the first year of operations of UN-Women, the President stated that it was necessary to reflect on the achievements of the past year. Just over a year ago, she had been honoured to be elected as the first President of the Executive Board of UN-Women. The significant achievements included the adoption of the organization's first strategic plan 2011-2013, the biennial support budget for 2011, financial regulations and rules and the first institutional budget 2012-2013. All elements had created a strong foundation for the future success of UN-Women.

39. UN-Women remained a symbol of hope for the cause of women. The President underlined her gratitude to all delegates, both members and observers, in particular the Bureau members, as well as the Secretariat. She extended special recognition to the men in the Executive Board, who had played a special role. In doing so, she cited the important contribution of John Gana (Nigeria) to the work of the Board.

40. In closing, the President thanked the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, the Assistant Secretaries-General, the Director of the Intergovernmental Affairs Division, the Secretary of the Board and the interim Secretary of the Board, as well as all secretariat staff who had contributed to the work of the Board. She also thanked the Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development of Nigeria for her participation in the Board session.